

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
ALL NATO CAPITALS
USLOSACLANT NORFOLK VA
USNMR SHAPE BE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDELMC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 07190

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TAGS: NATO, MILI, PEPR, PINT, UR, NO
SUBJECT: SOVIET SHIP VIOLATIONS OF NORWEGIAN WATERS

REFS: (A) STATE 187973 (DTG 252307Z JUL 78),
(B) USNATO 7147 (DTG 251645Z JUL 78)

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1. WASHINGTON ANALYSIS CONTAINED REF A ON POSSIBLE
EXPLANATIONS FOR RECENT SOVIET SHIP VIOLATIONS OF
NORWEGIAN WATERS STRIKES US AS PLAUSIBLE AND
CONVINCING. THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY A NUMBER OF
FACTORS BEHIND THE RECENT SOVIET ACTIONS: A USSR
DESIRE TO LESSEN NATO ACTIVITY INFLUENCE IN THE
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AREA WOULD, WE THINK, BE A PROMINENT ONE.

2. FOLLOWING JULY 26 MEETING OF NAC, NORWAY'S CHARGE
OESTREM (REFTEL (B)) TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT
NORWAY'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE VIBE (NOW ON
LEAVE) HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO REQUEST OSLO'S GO
AHEAD TO RAISE AT NATO THE SERIES OF COMMUNIST-FLAG

SHIP INCIDENTS IN NORWEGIAN WATERS. OESTREM HAD HEARD FROM OSLO THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON THE MATTER OF RAISING THE SUBJECT AT NATO. OESTREM WAS OF THE OPINION THAT OSLO WANTS TO ASSESS VERY CAREFULLY ALL OF THE DETAILS REGARDING THE REPORTED VIOLATIONS BEFORE RAISING THE SUBJECT AT NATO. OESTREM SAID IN THIS CONNECTION THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NAC COULD BE CALLED EVEN THOUGH REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE NAC ARE NOT FORESEEN DURING AUGUST AND NO MORE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES' LUNCHEONS WILL BE HELD UNTIL SEPTEMBER. OESTREM ADDED THAT, ALTERNATIVELY, THE MATTER MIGHT BE TAKEN UP IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. OESTREM ALSO CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT OSLO MAY CONCLUDE THAT SOME OF THE REPORTED VIOLATIONS WERE NOT IN FACT VIOLATIONS. WITH REGARD TO SOVIET VESSELS OBSERVED DROPPING "LINES OR WIRES" INTO THE WATER, HE SAID THAT THESE MAY HAVE BEEN ON THE HIGH SEAS JUST OUTSIDE OF NORWAY'S TERRITORIAL WATERS. OESTREM STRESSED, THOUGH, THAT, IN ALL THE YEARS SINCE WORLD WAR II, THERE NEVER HAD BEEN SUCH A CONCENTRATION OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING COMMUNIST-FLAG SHIPS IN OR ABOUT NORWEGIAN WATERS. HE CONCLUDED, THEREFORE, THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATION.

3. ON JULY 25, DENMARK'S REPRESENTATIVE ON NATO'S
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MILITARY COMMITTEE RADMLANGE COMMENTED TO US PRIVATELY THAT THE PRESENCE OF A COMMUNIST-FLAG VESSEL INSIDE NORWEGIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT A VIOLATION UNLESS THE VESSEL WAS INVOLVED IN AN ILLEGAL ACT: E.G., PUTTING PARTIES ASHORE WITHOUT NORWEGIAN CLEARANCE. HE NOTED THAT DENMARK FREQUENTLY HAD COMMUNIST-FLAG VESSELS SAILING LEGALLY IN ITS WATERS. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THE RECENT CONCENTRATION OF INCIDENTS IN NORWEGIAN WATERS WAS UNLIKELY TO HAVE BEEN COINCIDENTAL.

4.
COMMENT: NATO'S ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL PETRIGNANI HAS GIVEN US PRIVATELY HIS OPINION THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR HIM OR A MEMBER STATE OTHER THAN NORWAY TO RAISE THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION AT NATO. BASED ON OESTREM'S REMARKS WE WOULD JUDGE THAT NORWAY MAY DECIDE TO RAISE THE MATTER SOON, POSSIBLY NEXT WEEK. HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY PUT FORWARD IN REFTEL (B) THAT THE INCIDENTS MAY BE RELATED TO MOSCOW'S DISPLEASURE OVER FRG PARTICIPATION IN THE STANAVFORLANT EXERCISES OFF NORWAY SUGGESTS TO US

ANOTHER REASON FOR OSLO'S APPARENT HESITATION ABOUT
RAISING THE COMMUNIST-FLAG SHIP INCIDENTS AT NATO:
I.E., THE SENSITIVE ISSUE OF FRG PARTICIPATION IN
NATO EXERCISES IN NORWAY. BENNETT

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